

He hesitated a little, then said: "Oh, I don't know! Anything for a change!"

After this, who could doubt the sincerity of his convictions? Certainly, if ever there was a time for a new apostle of Christ to arise and preach His grandly simple message anew, that time is now. Such an one should belong to no Church, for in the multitude of churches and their differing and, unhappily, quarrelsome sects, Christ is crucified over and over again, and made to die a thousand shameful deaths. The old forms of preaching do not move the minds of the present generation. There needs fresh fire, more touching eloquence, more earnestness of purpose. And the light of Science must be brought to bear on the New Testament, in which its glorious pages will grow bright with hitherto unguessed mystical meanings if humbly and prayerfully studied. I have often wondered at the density of preachers who, in accordance with the established rule of their order, keep on telling their congregations to "save their souls," without making the slightest attempt to explain what the Soul *is*. The people taken *en masse* are never brought to realize the fact of the imperishable inner Self within each one of them—that actual Self which claims as much and more sustenance than the outer body on which we spend such a superabundance of care—care which avails nothing at death, while the attention bestowed on the deathless part of us avails everything. The world is growing surely tired of monotonous sermons on the old Jewish doctrine of original sin and necessary sacrifice. Most truly did Christ declare, "In vain do they worship Me, *teaching for doctrine the commandments of men*."

And, as has been set forth in the "Electric Creed," Christ did not come to us as a Sacrifice, but as a means of close communication with God. I consider it both horrible and sacrilegious to imagine that God, the Creator of Love and Beauty, could desire a bleeding

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# A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS.

A NOVEL.

BY

MARIE CORELLI.

AUTHOR OF "VENDETTA," ETC., ETC.,

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND APPENDIX.*

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## A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EDITION.

WHEN this "Romance" was first published a little more than a year ago, I had no expectation that it would meet with any special favour or attention. I wrote it simply because I strongly felt the force of the spiritual suggestions I have sought to convey in its pages; but I never hoped to awaken any response from the vast Public I strove to reach. I accepted in silence and resignation the rebuffs, both hot and cold, freely bestowed on me by the Sir Oracles of the Press, the critics. The book was a first effort, and naturally they could, and can still, find many faults in it. Contrary to their anticipations and my own, however, it has been and is being very widely read; and more than all, it is not only read, but loved. This is proved to me by the numbers of letters I daily receive from persons in all parts of the United Kingdom—utter strangers—who write in touching and seemingly sincere language of the consolation and hope they have derived from its unpretending pages. I take the opportunity here and now to thank them one and all for a sympathy of which I never dreamed—sympathy which is a far greater reward to the heart of an author than either wealth or fame. Some of these letters are quoted in the Appendix to the present volume—not in a boastful spirit of literary adver-

tisement, but merely as evidence to show that in spite of the doctrines of agnostics and materialists, there is a perpetual, passionate craving in the souls of many for that inward peace and absolute content which can only be obtained by a perfect faith in God and the coming Life Eternal. Materialism does not and can never still the hunger of the Immortal Spirit in man for those things divine, which are, by right, its heritage. Nothing on earth can soothe or console—nothing temporal can long delight it—in time the best gifts the world can offer seem valueless; while one spark of God's own essence remains alit within us, it is impossible that here, on this limited plane of thought and action, we should ever be satisfied. I do not address myself to those who have forsaken all spirituality—who have made their cold adieux to God, and who, of their own free will and choice, lie down in dust and ashes, with foolish faces turned earthwards, and hidden from the light—to them I say pitifully, "Requiescat in pace!" for they are as though they were not. It is to those who feel the quick stirrings of a larger, grander life within them—who realize with love and eagerness the wonders of the world to come, and who gaze appealingly across the darkness of present things, striving to see, no matter how distantly, the first faint glimmer of the brightness that glitters beyond the grave—to these I speak, inadequately and feebly I know, yet with all my soul desiring to cheer them, as they climb from steep to steep of high thought and noble endeavour, onward and upward.

The "Romance" has since its appearance been made the subject of much discussion; and I, as its author, have had to submit to a great deal of cross-questioning concerning its theories. I have been brought into contact with many peculiar phases of thought and feeling relating to occultism and clairvoyance, and people of all shades of opinion seek my acquaintance in the ex-

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pectation of being initiated into something very strange and mysterious—let me say, something vulgarly melodramatic—concerning the spiritual world. Their disappointment is always extreme when they learn that my creed has its foundation in Christ alone, and that I date my spiritual growth in this world from that one Light, containing in itself both the divine and human essence of absolute power, wisdom, and purity. "Only Christ!" is the look plainly expressed in their faces; and they turn from me altogether puzzled and dissatisfied. Were I to initiate them—or rather pretend to initiate them—into some new or old form of Buddhism—could I show them some poor trickery such as the vanishing of a box in the air, the turning of a red flower to white, or white to red, or any of the optical illusions practised with such skill by native conjurers, I might easily be surrounded by disciples of "Occultism"—persons who are generally ready, nay, even eager to be deceived. But "Only Christ!"—only the old, old story of Divine Love and Sacrifice!—how tame and trivial! No skipping about of chairs and tables—no "dematerialization of matter"—no jumping through a ceiling without making a hole in it—not even a sideboard possessed of voluntary volition—no excitement—no incipient madness—nothing but the well-worn doctrines of Christ which have been dinned into our ears from childhood—how shall anything new come of these? Many have eagerly asked me: "How can we perform miracles?" "Can we see visions?" "How are we to cultivate the electric Spirit within us?" I have only one reply to make to these "searchers after the unseen;" it is this—"With God all things are possible." Without Him, nothing is possible. The power of performing miracles, the gifts of healing and prophecy, and the ability to see beyond the things of this world, are all obtainable, but only through absolute faith in Christ. The smallest hesitation, the least grain of that insolent and foolish pride

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which dares to deny the very existence of the Creator, the faintest shadow of self-seeking or self-love, and the inner spiritual force is instantly paralyzed. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of those interested in this high question, that nothing temporal, however pleasant, brings any gratification or advantage to the Soul. While pent up in clay it is a cramped and prisoned creature, and unless fed with the divine and heating influences of unselfish love, unswerving faith, high aspiration and pure devotion, it starves and dwindles down to so feeble a flame that, when the body in which it has passed such a miserable existence perishes, it is forced to seek elsewhere for some fresh chance of development. I have explained this fully in the "Electric Creed," which, I may here observe, has been much commented upon, and by some deemed blasphemous—I know not why. Its tenets are completely borne out by the New Testament, which sacred little book, however, has much of its mystical and true meaning obscured nowadays through the indifference of those who read, and the apathy of those who hear. Sunday after Sunday its noble passages are drawled or droned forth by clergymen who have ceased to put any life or soul into their manner of utterance, and most of whom look upon their sacred vocation merely as a means of livelihood. Their congregations appear to listen, but in truth their thoughts are far away—they have "heard it so often," they murmur, with an apologetic yawn. The words, "Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold," fall on dull and inattentive ears; the people are unconscious that in themselves they are fulfilling that prophecy as well as this: "Seeing, they shall not see; and hearing, they shall not understand." And on the inspired pages they have all grown weary of, stands the perpetual solemn inquiry: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

I find, however, that the majority of persons who pro-

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fess eagerness to know something of the higher forms of spiritual progress, would rather believe in anything but the too-familiar doctrine of Christianity. They will pin their faith on table-turning, magnetic slate-writing, and other illusive phenomena ; but when it is suggested that, instead of all these things, they shall try to live such a careful, self-denying life as shall successfully foster the germ of Divinity within them, *thus making it capable of the highest clairvoyance and spiritual ability*, they are vaguely vexed and bewildered. Indeed, a South-Sea Islander of imposing aspect, who pretended to magic powers, and who could talk gibberish with sufficient impressiveness and mystery, would, I doubt not, secure a larger number of followers in our civilized London of to-day during the present "craze" for spiritualism—a "craze" which condemns itself at the outset by the manner in which its victims fall easy dupes to the merest charlatanism. True spiritual progress and knowledge are shown in the cheerful, sincere, and wholesome life of the person possessing it, and in the encouraging and ennobling influence that life has on the lives of others. Moreover it is displayed in the buoyancy and tireless energy of the body in which the beautiful, expanding, highly destined Spirit is for a time bidden to work—in the brightness and serenity of the eye, the absence of all depression, the contentment and tranquillity of the disposition and temper. Hypnotism, which is merely animal magnetism called by a new name, and which is nothing but the physical attraction of strong bodies brought to bear on weakly, diseased, or passive ones, has nothing whatever in common with what I may designate spiritual electric force. The professor of hypnotism is able on certain occasions to instil a thought into the mind of his patient, and force him (or her—it is generally a feeble woman who is the subject practised upon) to act upon it; pain may be soothed, and long trances may ensue, but this power is only temporary. The trance of hypnotism

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is a stupor,—in it the patient sees nothing worth remembering, even if he could remember, which he never does. This is a positive sign that hypnotism pertains to the material side of existence, and has nothing to do with the spiritual. Many persons—particularly women—who are highly nervous and in a debilitated condition of mind and body, imagine their state of chronic hysteria to be one of supernatural inspiration ; and several such overwrought beings have been introduced to me as "wonderful spiritualists," whereas they are only sickly and morbid. True spiritualism is above all things *healthy* ; it place the human being in a fearless, noble attitude towards both God and Man, and nothing but benefits can accrue from it. I feel the most profound pity for those excited ladies who gravely assure me that the "spirits" throw them their necklaces and other trinkets through the ceiling without making a hole in it. It is quite useless for me to tell them that spirits can touch nothing corporeal ; what little remaining belief they have in God would be far more easily shaken than their obstinate credence in these most vulgar tricks and delusions. When an old gentleman of staid and respectable demeanour, though somewhat wild about the eyes, declares that under "certain conditions" (what conditions they are he does not explain), a dog can be "dematerialized" into invisible atoms, and can pass like blown dust through a keyhole, picking up his own bits and coming together again in proper form on the other side, can I or any one else persuade him to return to sanity before it is too late, and avoid the asylum that looms for him in the distance ; No ; and I most earnestly desire those who read the "Romance" to understand quite clearly that the "spiritualism" treated of in its pages is an entirely different thing to what is generally understood by the word. I merely endeavour to slightly shadow forth the miraculous powers which I *know* are bestowed on those who truly love and understand the teachings of Christ,

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and, who, with adoring faith in Him, strive after the highest spirituality of a pure and perfect life. There is only this one way in which miracles may be performed—only this one means by which true visions of the worlds beyond this one may be seen—only this one connecting ray of communication between us and heaven, on which the descending and ascending angels may become familiar objects to our earthly eyes. The so called “signs and wonders” of modern self-styled “spiritualists” are always contemptibly trivial in character, and vulgar, when not absolutely ridiculous, in display; and, moreover, they have never been of the least service or advantage to humanity. Ask the “spiritualists” of to-day to feed a multitude of five thousand persons on seven loaves and a few fishes—to calm the enraged waters of the sea—to stay, by their “occult” power, the ravages of a plague—or to raise the dead, and their skill avails them nothing. Moreover, the very fact that they are not above taking money for the practice of their conjuring art is sufficient to condemn them; for what, after all, is their principal aim? To gain a certain notoriety by which they can serve themselves and their own personal worldly interests. In this there is neither Christianity nor spiritualism. The miracles of Christ were emanations of pitying love and entire unselfishness, performed solely for the benefit or relief of others, without ostentation or pretence at mystery. But the nineteenth-century expounders of “occult” doctrine reject Christ’s miracles altogether—they will even declare them to be mere inventions of the Apostles; and yet they deliberately presume to try and persuade their weak-minded followers that there is spiritual truth in their trumpery tricks of magnetic attraction and sleight of hand, which they know perfectly well in their own hearts are nothing but deceptions. I once asked an ardent Buddhist the reason of his preference for Buddhism to Christianity.

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